

U.S. Department of Education
2021 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [] Title I [] Charter [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Mrs. Collette P Tate
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Brussels Elementary/High School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address Unit 28100 Box 13
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Belgium, APO State DD Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 09714-9998

County USA

Telephone (322) 717-9900 Fax _____

Web site/URL https://www.dodea.edu/BrusselsEHS/index.cfm E-mail Collette.Tate@dodea.edu

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Mr. Kent Worford E-mail Kent.worford@dodea.edu
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Europe West Tel. (322) 717-9925

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Ms. Lynn Morris
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, leave blank.*

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The electronic signature on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2021 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2015 and grades participating in statewide assessments must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2019.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 or 2020.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the current school year (2020-2021) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools.)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 8 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 3 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 5 High schools
 - 1 K-12 schools
- 17 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not the district.)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)
 Suburban
 Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2020 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	11	6	17
1	10	10	20
2	9	10	19
3	10	7	17
4	10	11	21
5	15	10	25
6	10	7	17
7	17	14	31
8	13	19	32
9	11	10	21
10	10	13	23
11	11	18	29
12 or higher	12	9	21
Total Students	149	144	293

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 6.5 % Asian
 - 2.7 % Black or African American
 - 12.5 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 70.1 % White
 - 7.2 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2019 - 2020 school year: 15%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain:

Brussels American School is a school within the Department of Defense Education Activity. The DoDEA school system serves 106,000 military connected students at 224 schools in 14 countries, seven states, Guam, and Puerto Rico. Brussels American School parents and student sponsors are from all five military branches (Army, Navy, Airforce, Marines, and Coast Guard), employed by the State Department, and are included in the international delegation supporting the European Union. Our parent's assignment to Brussels varies in length from 2-5 years. Assignment to Brussels is often at the end of a Military Career.

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	26
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	18
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	44
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	293
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.15
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	15

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):

Azerbaijani, Uzbek, Georgian, Turkmen, Albanian, Russian, Kazakh, Slovenian, Ukrainian, Macedonian, Kyrgyz, Armenian, Serbian, Turkish, Croatian, Bosnian, French, Dutch

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 20 %
58 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 1 %

Total number students who qualify: 4

8. Students receiving special education services: 8 %

24 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. All students receiving special education services should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>3</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>4</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>2</u> Developmental Delay | <u>5</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>11</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 5

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	28
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	7
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	10
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 10:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	95%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2020.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	19
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	95%
Enrolled in a community college	5%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school’s mission or vision statement.

Collaborating to provide equitable, accessible education and to prepare students for lifelong learning.

16. Briefly describe how your school has been operating during the current 2020-2021 school year (e.g., open as usual, online only, a hybrid model, etc.)? If different grade levels in your building operate in different ways, include this. If the school began with one model and switched to another partially through the year, include this as well.

Brussels American School (BAS) has taken great care to fully support the social-emotional well-being of our faculty and students during the unique circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. To address our challenge, BAS has employed the strategy of Blended Learning, anchored to the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) College and Career Ready Standards (CCRS) resources and materials. With Google Classroom serving as the current platform, Brussels American School teachers proactively began to integrate Blended Learning into instructional delivery in late winter of 2020. This foresight and preparation allowed teachers and students to seamlessly transition to remote learning when safety precautions restricted access to on-campus instruction from March through June of 2021. The 2020-2021 school year began with ‘open as usual’ or ‘brick-and-mortar’ education with many operational pandemic protocols including mandatory face masks, social distancing, and sanitation routines. We addressed instructional challenges with Blended Learning as a guiding strategy, allowing for the continuation of high-quality instruction and student learning regardless of student or teacher location.

Many teachers at BAS already employ a Flipped Classroom approach, reserving at homework for the delivery of notes, lectures and resource materials which students can review at their own pace. This allows class time to be transformed into student-centered, hands-on experiences where the teacher is free to serve as the guide, circulating, observing and addressing questions as needed. Supporting student learning in the COVID era has prompted teachers to rethink how this strategy could be modified further to simultaneously support in-person and remote learners in an engaging

way, synchronously and asynchronously. In support of the Blended Learning strategy, Brussels American School teachers work to establish teacher presence in any virtual component of their instruction. Use of collaborative, digital platforms has allowed students to connect socially and academically to their peers and their instructor maintaining a sense of community in remote or socially-distanced learning environments.

The COVID pandemic has resulted in a measurable impact on student attendance due to quarantine requirements. To address this and provide supports that sustain student progress while in remote education, elementary students in quarantine are contacted daily by the classroom teacher. In the Middle and High School, a quarantine- seminar program was developed to address academic and social-emotional struggles while in quarantine.

17. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

PART III - SUMMARY

Brussels American School maintains a reputation of rigor and excellence. BAS has a 100% graduation rate with consistently more than 90% of BAS graduates attending 4-year colleges including Yale, Georgetown, MIT and US Service Academies. Historically, nearly 50% of high school students enroll in one or more Advanced Placement courses. Consistently scoring higher in comparison to DoDEA and global contemporaries on math and literacy measures, BAS nonetheless continues to identify opportunities for growth and employ targeted interventions to improve learning for all students.

The Brussels American School campus is situated on 17 acres, just east of Brussels in the green belt of Sterrebeek, a Flemish speaking commune. Due to our location and clientele, we are a unique Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) school. We have a combined population of over 300 elementary, middle and high school students in grades K-12, who are primarily from military and diplomatic families serving the American tri-mission in the Brussels area. While the majority of our students are American, Brussels American School educates US Military and State Department students, as well as North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Member and Partnership for Peace nations. We currently serve students from over 25 countries including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, North Macedonia, Slovenia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. Our diverse community serves to enrich the educational experiences of our students and makes us one of the most culturally unique schools in DoDEA.

Brussels American School has a history that is intertwined with many important events in post-World War II, Europe. Established in Paris, France in 1946 our school was originally called “The American Community School of Paris.” The school was founded to educate the children of American military families who arrived in France following the Second World War to work at the newly established North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The American School of Paris was the first international school established in Europe and the only American school in France at the time. In the spring of 1966, French President Charles de Gaulle decided to leave NATO and ordered all United States military to leave France by 1967. NATO headquarters was then moved to Brussels, Belgium. The new NATO support school was named Brussels American School.

Brussels American School is currently overseeing the construction of our 21st Century School building. Anticipated to open in 2023, this school will support student-centered, experiential learning that is physically and intellectually interactive. The school is designed with multi-purpose, common areas where collaborative instruction and group learning can occur. These neighborhood areas branch into exploratory and student support spaces known as “learning studios.” Classrooms are designed to foster integrated and diverse activities in a technology-rich environment with moveable furniture and partitions to maximize instructional flexibility.

Brussels American School provides a rigorous and robust variety of programs for kindergarten through the 12th grade. Highly qualified, motivated and caring teachers are supported by a diverse team of specialists that support learning, equity, and physical and emotional well-being. The Educational Technologist provides continual training and resources to assist teachers with creating engaging, accessible and media-rich lessons. BAS also offers a PSCD (Preschool for Children with Disabilities) program as well as an outstanding special education program preschool - 12th grade which includes speech and occupational therapy services.

Brussels American School is unique in that we have a combined population of preschool through grade 12 students on a single campus. The elementary school consists of a K-2 team and a 3-5 team in which teachers have a shared responsibility for the academic progress of students within the team. Teachers and aides work with students of other grades in after school tutoring while lessons and activities are shared across grade levels to offer remediation or extension activities. Our middle and high school provide a well-rounded selection of courses so that our students are well prepared for college and career including 19 Advanced Placement courses.

Students at Brussels American School are also afforded an ample variety of student activities, sports and clubs in which to participate. After school clubs are offered throughout the school year and include Student Council, Chess, Art, French, Drama, Homework and Robotics. After school sports such as soccer, track, cross country, basketball, wrestling, tennis, and cheerleading are also offered.

As a unit school with a small faculty, each member of our community supports BAS students in a multitude of ways. Teachers often teach multiple subjects across several grade levels. They also sponsor student activities, sports, or clubs, and oftentimes more than one each year. Frequently, teachers may have siblings in their various classes or clubs and may also teach individual students across many grade levels. This permeation of teacher involvement threads throughout our community, creating strong relationships with our BAS families that can last well beyond their time in Brussels.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

Brussels American School has operated at the forefront of 21st century teaching and learning employing a wide range of technologies and instructional approaches to support student learning. As such, BAS was in an advantageous position to address the challenges of instruction during the COVID pandemic. Teachers and students have had to be ready to shift from in-school instruction to remote learning with limited notice. This has been an intense period of innovation ensuring students continue to receive rigorous, high-quality instruction. Rigor in the Blended Learning Classroom has been emphasized to effectively deliver instruction to students who are in-class and those quarantined at home. Technology permits the delivery of engaging material across multiple learning styles while facilitating opportunities for synchronous and asynchronous collaboration.

Curriculum and instruction at Brussels American School is guided by the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) College and Career Ready Standards (CCRS). These standards frame the learning expectations for grades K-12 establishing clear, consistent and high learning goals focused on critical thinking, problem solving to prepare students success in college or career. The CCRS along with corresponding pacing guides and scope and sequences are used throughout DoDEA.

BAS employs a highly educated, skilled and experienced teaching and support staff. As such, we utilize research-based instructional practices that engage students from bell-to-bell such as Inductive Learning, Project-Based Learning, and Model Enhancing Activities at the secondary level while Guiding Reading, Writing and Math are employed at the elementary levels. Students can be seen working in collaborative groups completing hands-on labs and activities, engaging in academic discourse, artistic creation, or engineering. Lesson are tiered to support learners of varying abilities and interests, allowing all students to participate. Leadership has placed a premium on the use of instructional strategies that maximize student engagement and activate higher-order thinking.

The CCRS for Literacy outline three key expectations at all grade levels K-12 and is vertically aligned through interconnected standards and skills. These include building background knowledge through content rich non-fiction, providing practice with complex text that includes academic language, and using evidence from text in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. In the elementary school, literacy focuses on foundational skills as we transition our learners from learning to read to reading to learn. Middle school ELA lays a solid foundation for our students to use the English language to effectively communicate and enable critical thinking. High school courses provide a forum to use reasoning and evidence to communicate clearly and delve into literature masterpieces while examining contemporary musings. Courses of ELA rigor offered at BAS include AP Literature and AP Language. Additional literacy support courses include K-1 Spring Forward, 2-6 Steps to Advance, and 7-12 Read180 Universal.

Improving literacy outcomes is one of the tenants of our school goals. To support this, teachers of grades K-12 and across all disciplines employ the strategies of Reading for Meaning and Write to Learn. Support and Refute organizers are often used to assist students with the process of citing textual evidence. Students are regularly provided with activities to exercise their readable writing and citing of evidence.

Throughout BAS, K-12 math instruction is focused on problem solving and the application of mathematical concepts. Students are encouraged to engage in productive struggle, which can empower students and increase efficacy. Rich tasks are used regularly across all grades as a means to promote higher-order thinking and a deeper knowledge of the content. These real-world applications of mathematics allow for multiple entry points and low threshold, high ceiling opportunities allowing all learners to develop fluency of concepts and while offering enrichment at individualized levels. At the elementary level, these tasks are provided using the I-Do, We-Do, You-Do strategy, appropriately scaffolding and building student confidence. Elementary grades introduce beginning number sense in kindergarten and end with understanding of pre-algebraic concepts in grade 5. Middle School grade 6 math through Algebra 1 and Geometry sets a firm foundation for HS advanced courses. Students learn to construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others (MP3) and model with mathematics (MP4). High school and advanced

courses offered include Algebra 2, Pre-Calculus, AP Calculus AB/ BC and AP Statistics. Math support courses including MS iReady and -Math are available to support struggling BAS learners.

The DoDEA CCRS for Science are based on the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and as such, the science program at Brussels American School emphasizes the active engagement of students in scientific and engineering practices. Grades K-5 implement the multi-sensory FOSS kits which immerse students in investigation of phenomena and solving real-world problems. All K-5 lessons based in either Life Science, Physical Science, or Earth and Space Science incorporate Science and Engineering Practices, Crosscutting Concepts, and Disciplinary Core Ideas. In grades 6-8, students build upon these experiences engaging in scientific inquiry, honing the science practices with laboratory experiences. All high school students are required to take a minimum of three sciences. General High School and advanced science courses include Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Anatomy and Physiology, AP Biology, AP Environmental Science, AP Physics 1, AP Physics 2, AP Physics C, and AP Chemistry.

The Social Studies curriculum at Brussels American School is designed to integrate content K-12 and skills from various disciplines in ways that promote critical thinking and support literacy competency. School year 21-22 is our much-anticipated College and Career Standards for Social Studies K-5 implementation. Our current K-5 curriculum focus is World Geography, American History, and Global Citizenship. MS Social Studies courses include Eastern Hemisphere and US History. Middle School curriculum makes content connections through use of Essential or Big Questions fostering discourse. Students compare and contrast ideas, making connections to real-world, current topics. High School courses use the Socratic Method to expand high-level thinking and students are asked to formulate educated opinions and provide feasible opportunities for taking informed action. Diverse offerings in high school include World History, US History, Government, Psychology, AP World History, AP European History, AP Human Geography, AP Government, and AP Psychology.

Brussels American School uses a variety of student assessment data to drive instruction and school improvement. Each educator employs Action Research in their practice to gauge student learning to make timely adjustments and provide clarification and support as needed. Additionally, within Focused Collaboration (FC), faculty participates in a collaborative process to gather and analyze student data from formative assessments including classwork and interim assessments to identify standards or populations of students to focus research based instructional strategies and targeted supports as well as measure growth. Summative assessments, such as those from the DoDEA Comprehensive Assessment Program (DCAS), provide faculty with the data for analysis to determine future school action plans and goals.

1a. For secondary schools (middle and/or high school grades):

It is the fundamental mission of DoDEA, and therefore Brussels American School, to prepare our military-connected students for success in college and career. The CCR standards provide the foundation for this success while providing rigorous learning experiences that prepare students for a wide range of post-secondary pursuits. Additionally, students are given many opportunities to participate in extension activities and clubs that develop leadership skills and civic responsibility while collaborating with students from across Europe. These include, but are not limited to, Model United Nations (UN) at The Hague, the International Student Leadership Institute in Oberwesel, Germany and Model NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization). Students also participate in JSHS (Junior Science and Humanities Symposium) in Wiesbaden, Germany and in the past 3 years, 5 students have placed in the Regionals with 3 competing in the National Competition.

As part of our College and Career plan, BAS offers 5 Career and Technical (CTE) pathways in addition to an exceedingly robust Advanced Placement (AP) program, especially considering the small size of the school. BAS CTE pathways include Video Communications, Business Management, Cyber Security, Digital Design and Communication, and Programming. With only 108 students enrolled in high school, BAS currently offers 18 AP courses with 13 being offered on campus and 5 offered through the DoDEA Virtual School. In 2020, 78 exams were taken by 40 students, representing 37% of our high school student body. 90% of the exams taken by Brussels American School students in 2020 resulted in a score of 3 or above. Of these students, 20% scored high enough to be recognized as AP scholars, with an average score

of 3.69; 5% of these students were recognized as AP Scholars with Honors with an average score of 4.00; 15% of tested students were recognized as AP Scholars with Distinction with an average score of 4.28, and 5% were recognized as National AP Scholars with an average score of 4.59.

1b. For schools that offer preschool for three- and/or four-year old students:

At BAS, Preschool Services for Children with Disabilities (PSCD) is offered for students ages 3-5. Students are determined eligible via the school's Case Study Committee if they are found to be functioning significantly behind their non-disabled peers. The program promotes student growth in physical, cognitive, and social-emotional development. The core curriculum is designed to give students foundational support preparing them for success with the transition to Kindergarten. Students engage in lessons and activities that directly connect with learning objectives outlined in the DoDEA K-3 CCRS, with specific emphasis on literacy, building students' understanding and working knowledge of the basic conventions of English. Our students respond to texts by interacting during read-alouds and book conversations using emergent reading skills and retelling.

A fundamental component of PSCD is the functional environment of the classroom. Students participate in hands-on activities, interact with learning tools, engage in peer socialization, and develop fine and gross motor skills. The program has been successful in achieving academic readiness and in preparing students for the routines and expectations in kindergarten. Scaffolds for rigor are in place to help each child continuously build on their progress. When appropriate, students have opportunities to immerse in the regular classroom and participate in activities with kindergarten students for increasing intervals of time. This integration provides preschoolers an opportunity to be exposed to and participate in social exchanges, classroom routines, motor activities, and pre-academic skills.

COVID-19 has had an impact on the interactive component of the program, limiting the amount of immersion activities with the kindergarten classes. Safety protocols such as maintaining social distancing and use of transparent masks or shields has been normalized and thus we've been able to continue to maintain a robust learning experience by moving play activities outside as much as possible and through constant sanitization of toys, learning manipulatives and contact surfaces.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Brussels American School embraces the whole-child approach to education, nurturing all aspects of a child's development and learning. A well-rounded education fosters the development of a wider range of knowledge and skills that would prepare students for college and career readiness. In addition to the core curriculum, a wealth of course offerings allow students to specialize in areas of specific interest or to explore general topics.

Students at BAS have an opportunity to develop an appreciation and understanding of the culture and language of Belgium through our Host Nation classes. As a unique offering for grades K-5, students are introduced to host nation languages, of which, Belgium has two: French and Dutch. Students engage in interdisciplinary activities that expand their ability to operate and communicate in the host nation as well as empower them to be successful in a multicultural and interconnected world. Students may continue to develop their proficiency in French or Spanish at the secondary level.

The Fine Arts program at Brussels American School includes courses in Music, Visual Arts and Humanities. Due to COVID safety measures, our educators have been masters of adaptation. Music courses were modified to use only percussive or string instruments to facilitate the use of protective masks. Flautists and horn players alike are continuing their musical education on steel and bucket drums. And our holiday theatrical production was delivered via video conferencing with each actor presenting from separate rooms.

Physical Education (PE) is essential to the general health and wellbeing of our students. To accommodate COVID safety precautions, a variety of pandemic-friendly activities have been incorporated. These include individual sports skills, fitness, dance, and yoga. Additionally, teachers and students have braved the Belgian winter weather to conduct activities outdoors or with windows and doors open to improve

ventilation.

Technology use is integrated into all aspects of teaching and learning at Brussels American School. A media-rich, technology facilitated learning environment increases collective digital literacy and helps to create responsible and respectful digital citizens. To develop digital citizenry, the Informational Specialist provides lessons, activities and support for finding and evaluating digital resources, using databases and exercising good digital etiquette.

3. Academic Supports:

Equity and accessibility are guiding principles at Brussels American School. We embrace the notion that all students can be successful. To that end, teachers utilize the Universal Design for Learning framework to create fully inclusive learning experiences regardless of ability. This is achieved by providing multiple means of student engagement, content representation, and student expression.

Student learning is measured regularly, and analysis of the resulting data informs teachers of opportunities for growth or extension. Should gaps in learning be identified, they are addressed through the targeted use of research based interventions. Progress is monitored through our Focused Collaboration cycles as well as teacher Action Research through the lens of DuFour's four critical questions.

Students performing below expectation have a variety of supports available. If a struggling or underperforming student is identified and they are not yet eligible for special education services, teachers may refer the student to the Student Support Team (SST) where student performance is analyzed and an individualized plan is created to implement targeted Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions. The SST monitors student progress and modifies the plan as needed until student success is achieved or a determination is made to pursue additional evaluation.

BAS offers a differentiated seminar period in which students have dedicated time to connect with teachers in courses where additional instruction or remediation is needed. Students needing further structure and teacher support after school are also invited to attend Homework Club. Elementary teachers currently offer after school tutoring in math and literacy to nearly 25% of our elementary students to address identified gaps in learning.

Within individual classes, any student that has mastered the current content is given opportunities for extension or enrichment. These activities serve to challenge students and allow them to apply their knowledge at a higher level without requiring them to complete additional work. Choice boards are frequently used to allow students to self-select extension activities giving students greater agency and maintaining engagement. Students are also encouraged to enroll in AP coursework. Brussels American School maintains a reputation of rigor and high achievement with over 86% of AP test takers scoring a 3 or above over the last 5 years. In the elementary grades, the Advanced Academic Program instructor regularly joins classrooms to co-teach, providing extension activities covering the current content standards to levels I and II gifted students.

Brussels American School serves a very diverse student population. Approximately 20% of our student population is designated as English Language Learners (ELL), many in the elementary grades operating at levels 1 and 2. To address this, BAS actively recruits highly qualified educators holding supplemental ELL certification and experience.

Additionally, BAS serves students requiring special education services and is staffed to support mild to moderate disabilities. However, without a formal program or tools, we also provide

services for more severely disabled students to support the military-mission families. Although not staffed with a Behavioral Health, Psychology or OT specialist on campus, we are able to maintain high quality services drawing on the talent within our building.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

A Brussels American School education is highly sought and celebrated for excellent instruction and exceptional student performance. Educators employ a variety of best practices to engage students in the learning process, the corner of these being development of a student-centered classroom, giving students greater autonomy and agency. A glimpse into any classroom would reveal students participating in collaborative, hands-on explorations, academic discourse, and productive struggle with design-based tasks.

A recurring, multi-faceted challenge comes with continually advancing a culture of academic excellence and rigor for our high performing students while maintaining accessibility for all. Brussels American School addresses this through our College and Career Pathways which offer students coursework in a wide range of Advanced Placement and Career and Technical courses. Within classrooms, the use of technology to support Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles allows teachers to support students with varying interests and abilities by offering multiple means of student engagement, knowledge representation and expression.

Integration of technology has also played a vital role in the seamless transition to our Blended Learning approach during the COVID-19 pandemic. Students have been able to continue to engage in learning whether at home or on campus. Teachers continue to foster student engagement by modifying best practices to include those students working remotely. Collaborative student activities are one way in which teachers can maintain an atmosphere of community, requiring remote students participate synchronously with peers.

Brussels American School recognizes the value of educating the whole child through rich opportunities and experiences for students. These extracurricular opportunities provide outlets for students to explore interests, express themselves in a healthy manner, or perhaps to experience successes and pride unrelated to classwork. These teams or clubs may focus on academics or on social/emotional needs, helping students develop and maintain healthy relationships with their peers. BAS also supports several sports teams. The elementary school provides clubs including Garden Club, Coding, Geography, Sign Language, Friendship Club, First Aid, Student Council, and American Culture Club.

To facilitate student connections and participation in these opportunities during COVID, BAS has hosted socially distanced social events. Homecoming events were reimaged and structure to maximize safety while still allowing students to participate in traditional school experiences. Technology applications were quickly adopted to allow for at-home participation in clubs and events for quarantined students.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Many of Brussels American School's teachers have taught individual students several times over the course of the years as well as instructed siblings, giving an almost familial tie to our community of learners. As a small community, teachers are also often connected directly with parents through social media and social activities within the community. Informal conversations commonly occur further conveying to parents and students the teacher's interest and investment in each student's success. Teachers also sponsor or coach most of the extracurricular activities on campus. These activities allow teachers to further develop their relationships with the students and the community in a nonacademic context. These relationships serve as the foundation of community engagement at Brussels American School.

BAS shifted promptly to provide continuous and unprecedented levels of support to our parents and students in response to COVID challenges. Teachers delivered materials to families' doorsteps and contact-free school Drop-offs and Pick-ups were established by the Administrative Officer to ensure students had access to the materials and technology they needed for learning. A Distance Learning portal was created in which parents and students could easily access the daily schedule and their virtual classrooms and media center resources were proactively supplied in digital format to teachers and families. Our Daily Bulletin provides day-to-day communications and valuable resources, information and forms are maintained on our Parent

Portal.

Brussels American School also hosts or participates in regular meetings with parents and the community through Brussels American School Advisory Council, the Parent, Teacher, and Student Organization and a regular parent/administrative meeting called Second Cup of Coffee. Each of these meetings provides opportunities for parents to engage directly with school administration and provide input and feedback.

Although not affiliated with a local military base, Brussels American School enjoys the rich support of its smaller, tight-knit community. Parents are quick to dedicate their time in a myriad of ways to support learning and the social/emotional development of our students. Several parents support instruction directly serving as educators, substitutes, or aides while other parents support the extracurricular opportunities as coaches and mentors. The PTSO manages the school store and hosts fundraisers throughout the school year to supply teachers with classroom resources, grant monies and provide opportunities for financial waivers for student activities. Over the past year, the PTSO has directed several initiatives to boost student and teacher morale during the challenges of COVID, such as a modified teacher appreciation luncheon in which the food was individually packaged for safety.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

The Brussels American School community of administration, faculty, staff, and families is an interconnected network working collaboratively and respectfully to further our mission to foster student success. Much of this work is conducted in our Focused Collaboration which creates a regularly scheduled, intentional time for educators to strengthen their reflective practice and thus increase student outcomes. This collaborative, professional practice creates a supportive environment for educators to share best practices and experiences and receive “critical friend” feedback from colleagues. Guided by our School Action Plan (SAP) and the District Action Plan (DAP), our work in Focused Collaboration is concentrated on the improvement of student performance on literacy and math measures. Efforts to close any achievement gaps are the shared responsibility of all teachers at every grade level.

Throughout the year, we have opportunities for Peer-to-Peer professional learning. Many of our faculty have developed expertise of new technology applications or teaching strategies and in turn, lead sessions for other teachers interested in incorporating these into their own practice. These Peer-to-Peer sessions lend themselves to the development of organic professional learning communities in which colleagues are actively engaged in a process of continuous improvement to ensure greater achievement for all students.

The faculty at Brussels American School are each highly qualified in their respective fields of education and receive continuous professional development through BAS. As professionals, they often seek out independent sources of professional development and continuing education to further develop their practice. As many of our teachers instruct multiple disciplines across grade levels, this continued professional learning is invaluable in preparing them to be competent and effective educators, drawing on pedagogical content knowledge for various subjects. The willingness of our educators to seek and further develop expertise allows Brussels American School to offer a wide variety of courses despite a small number of faculty.

To mitigate the challenges of teaching and learning in a time of COVID-19, the Brussels American School Technology Community has been leading our technology-based professional learning. With a focus on increasing student engagement and self-direction in the blended classroom, the Technology Community and faculty have stepped forward to assist with the development of effective implementation of Blended Learning strategies. Teachers collaborate with the Technology Team to further develop their digital literacy and efficacy to provide a consistent and engaging learning opportunities during this transition to hybrid instruction.

4. School Leadership:

2021 has presented multiple opportunities for school leaders to reawaken Student Excellence, renovate School Excellence, and redefine Outreach Excellence. Through the Pandemic, we’ve weathered a period of

intense innovation by necessity, permanently altering how we conduct daily business. March 2020 required an immediate pivot from brick-and-mortar education to shelter-in-place online learning. During this time, Brussels leadership pulled heavily on hallmarks of effective transformational leadership such as shared leadership and proactive strategic planning, resulting in maintenance of a resilient, inclusive, student-centered school focusing on highest student achievement.

One of the most transformative changes at BAS in recent years has been to purposefully activate teacher leaders creating an environment of shared leadership. Nearly 40% of faculty participates in a leadership role of some capacity. This fosters a collective responsibility for the success of BAS and its students across disciplines and grade levels while increasing school-wide communication, efficiency and effectiveness. Every teacher at BAS now has a working knowledge of the school mission and vision and competently employs the strategies to support them. Additionally, in disseminating opportunities for leadership, educators are acknowledged for their professionalism and expertise, which contributes to increased morale and intrinsic motivation.

Mid-spring of 2020, pandemic protocols required a strategic leadership expansion as we anticipated returning to brick-and mortar education for SY2021-2022. Planning ahead for face-to-face education, a new level of leadership grew within BAS operation management. The operations leadership team, comprised of the Administrative Officer, School Nurse, facilities, staff, and faculty volunteers, spent much of the summer modifying classroom arrangement, analyzing student flow patterns across campus and adjusting class scheduling to improve safety by minimizing person-to-person contact throughout the school day. The team developed daily operational protocols, stockpiled personal protective equipment, and developed a plan to educate all stakeholders on SY21-22 COVID-19 operations and requirements. Through seven COVID positive events in the school during SY20-21, the operations team led BAS quarantine planning, ensured technology and educational resources were provided to students, arranged COVID testing with local preventative medicine, and provided personalized, clear, and timely communication.

As a result, Brussels American School has been able to operate safely with face-to-face instruction for the whole of the 2020-2021 school year, focused on education and student achievement. In any year, but perhaps this year especially, the Brussels American School leadership team has demonstrated the ability to employ a "we are in this together" leadership style that allows us to capitalize on our many strengths to continue to excel even in adverse times.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

DoDEA has recently enacted a Race, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (REDI) Operation intended to identify culturally responsive teaching standards and provide professional learning regarding bias in education. As one of the most culturally diverse schools within DoDEA, Brussels American School celebrates its heterogeneity, stressing inclusivity, and continues to lead in this endeavor.

Teachers at Brussels American School employ culturally responsive pedagogy in which instruction is student-centered and aims to engage students' unique cultural strengths. Lessons and activities are designed to draw upon students' prior knowledge and personal experiences through real-world applications to increase engagement and foster deeper connections with the content, thus improving student outcomes.

The English Language Learner instructors, in collaboration with our International Families Group, host a yearly International Festival. Students host booths showcasing their nation's culture and traditions. Students and families tour the booths, sampling foods and drinks. Hosts, wearing traditional clothing, lead visitors in games, songs and dances. Informational brochures for each country represented were student developed and shared along with a simulated passport in which visitors could receive a stamp. Flags from each of the nations represented at our school continue to hang in the auditorium following one of the earliest International Festival events.

Brussels American School also supports an Inclusivity Club whose mission is to provide a more tolerant environment, establish justice, ensure an atmosphere free of prejudice and discrimination and promote a more diverse educational experience. The club organizes school events such as DEEW (Diversity, Equality and Education Week), Unity Week, and a Mix-It-Up lunch event. Mix-It-Up is an international campaign that encourages students to connect with someone new over lunch. In crossing social boundaries biases and misperceptions can be confronted and dispelled. The club also arranges speakers, workshop opportunities and furthers the promotion of inclusion throughout the year.

Brussels American School celebrates a wonderfully diverse population of students and opportunities abound to recognize and honor many different cultures. In emphasizing the value of diversity, Brussels American School fosters a learning environment in which every student feels their culture is reflected in the classroom environment and instruction improving social-emotional outcomes, thus increasing academic engagement and student achievement.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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